

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8492

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 6192

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, EFIN, NI (LEFEVRE, LOUIS)

SUBJECT: LEFEVRE AND AIIC/AIG: CURRENT STATUS

1. I HAD LENGTHY TOUR D'HORIZON MAY 17 WITH LEFEVRE. CONSUL HUFFMAN PARTICIPATED. LEFEVRE ACCEPTED WITHOUT ARGUMENT MY REITERATION OF EMBASSY'S DISINCLINATION AT PRESENT TIME ACTIVELY TO CONSIDER THE OPTION OF SEEKING "A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT" (I.E., SQUASHING) OF THE LEGAL CASE LODGED AGAINST HIM BY THE FMG. I EXPLAINED I HAD MADE THIS EQUALLY CLEAR TO AIG DURING RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH THEM IN BOTH WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK. I SAID WE DID NOT REJECT THE OPTION BUT BELIEVED OTHER AVENUES SHOULD BE FURTHER EXPLORED FIRST.

2. LEFEVRE ASKED ME ONCE AGAIN TO REHEARSE THE NATURE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL YUSUFU'S "AGREEMENT" TO DISPOSE OF THE CASE. I TOLD HIM I HAD REPLIED TO A SMILAR QUESTION FROM GREENBERG, AND HXD BEEN MUCH SURPRISED TO SEE THAT GREENBERG HAD APPARENTLY CONVINCED HIMSELF THAT YUSUFU "HAD BROKEN HIS PROMISE" TO DISPOSE OF THE CASE. I TOLD LEFEVRE THAT, WHEREAS YUSUFU HAD INDEED TOLD ME HE WANTED RPT WANTED TO PROCESS THE CASE PROMPTLY BECAUSE OF THE PRESSURES TO WHICH HE AND HIS ASSOCIATES WERE SUBJECT, HE HAD MADE NO COMMITMENTS OTHER THAN TO DO HIS BEST. I TOLD LEFEVRE I RESENTED GREENBERG'S INSISTENCE
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ON THIS POINT, AND THAT I HAD INFORMED GREENBERG I COULD NOT ACCEPT HIS INSTRUCTING ME ON HOW THE US GOVERNMENT OR THE EMBASSY SHOULD COMPORT ITSELF IN THIS MATTER. LEFEVRE REPLIED TO THE EFFECT THAT THE EMBASSY COULD THUS BE SYMPATHETIC WITH WHAT PEOPLE WHO WORKED FOR GREENBERG HAD TO PUT UP WITH. HE SAID "GREENBERG WILL STEAMROLLER ANYONE WHO DOESN'T STAND UP TO HIM."

3. LEFEVRE AGREED THAT THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION FOR THE MOMENT APPEARED TO BE TO CONTINUE TO WORK WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE LEGAL PROCESS AND PURSUE THE OPTION OF DISMISSAL OF THE CASE BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL. ABOUZEID AND BROWER WOULD COME TO LAGOS NEXT WEEK TO PARTICIPATE IN AN AIIC BOARD MEETING THAT WOULD HOPEFULLY PRODUCE IN FINAL FORM THE NECESSARY MORTGAGE TRANSFER DOCUMENTS. LEFEVRE SAID THESE DOCUMENTS SHOULD FIRMLY ESTABLISH THE LEGALITY OF THE QUESTIONED NAIRA 450,000 LOAN. WITH THIS TRANSACTION THUS CONFIRMED, ALBEIT TARDILY, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OUGHT TO BE ABLE, ACCORDING TO LEFEVRE, TO ENTERTAIN A PROPOSAL FOR DISMISSAL OF THE CASE AGAINST EGBE AND LEFEVRE.

4. WHILE NOT EXPRESSLY COMMITTING HIMSELF TO ANY SPECIFIC PERSONAL FUTURE COURSE OF ACTION, LEFEVRE IMPLIED HE WOULD BE WILLING TO PROVIDE TESTIMONY FROM OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY OR RETURN TO PROVIDE IT IN LAGOS.

5. AS FOR AIIC'S ONGOING NEGOTIATION WITH THE FMG REGARDING INDIGENIZATION OF SIXTY PERCENT OF ITS EQUITY, LEFEVRE SAID TALKS WERE CONTINUING AND THAT IN PARTICULAR HE DETECTED POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENT IN ATTITUDE OF CAPITAL ISSUES COMMISSION. WE SHOULD GET A MORE DETAILED PICTURE FROM ABOUZEID NEXT WEEK.

6. COMMENT: EMBASSY LOOKS FORWARD TO DISCUSSING THESE VARIOUS OPTIONS FURTHER WITH ABOUZEID AND BROWER NEXT WEEK. WE ARE PLEASED THAT BROWER IS COMING. EMBASSY IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY KNOW-CONFIDENTIAL

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LEDGABLE ABOUT NIGERIAN LAW AND LEGAL PROCEDURES, BUT WE ARE CONCERNED THAT AIIC/AIG NOT PRESUME TOO MUCH ON OUR ABILITY TO PROVIDE SOUND LEGAL ADVICE OR TO FIGHT THEIR BATTLES FOR THEM. EASUM

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